

FRANCIS ROONEY

19TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0919

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July 11, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

The Everglades and Lake Okeechobee Watershed include 16 counties and 164 cities. It has a \$2 trillion economic impact on the state and supports 55% (\$1.3 trillion) of the real estate value in Florida. For every dollar invested in this ecosystem, it produces \$4 in economic benefits.

Due to a century of human development, the greater Everglades ecosystem is now less than half of its original size and Lake Okeechobee fills up six times faster than it can be drained, resulting in massive discharges into the adjacent rivers and coastal areas. These discharges are untreated, and impact the delicate balance of fresh water and salt water in the coastal ecosystems. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) seeks to restore balance to these delicate ecosystems, ultimately reducing harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, and sending clean water south to the marshes of the Everglades and Florida Bay.

That is why on March 29, 2017, I joined thirteen of my Florida colleagues in urging strong support for all Department of Interior projects relating to the Everglades and the South Florida watershed. Specifically, we urged strong support to all projects related to the CERP, including the recently authorized Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP).

In addition to the letter to the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, 27 members of the Florida delegation joined in sending a letter to President Donald Trump requesting his strong support for the Everglades and its restoration projects. The implications of the health of this ecosystem impact the entire State and I encourage you to consider the strong bipartisan support for CERP projects as you mark-up the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies FY 2018 Appropriations bill. I have attached the letter for your reference.

Sincerely



Francis Rooney
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0919

February 3, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In your Inaugural Speech, you made clear that infrastructure is a priority of your Administration. We applaud your desire to work on this issue, and we invite you to look at the incredible work being done by the Everglades federal/state partnership, especially the work being done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). We are especially encouraged by your comments at the Collier County Fairgrounds on October 23, 2016 when you said, "A Trump Administration will work alongside you to protect and restore the beautiful Florida Everglades."

As you prepare your budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, we request that you strongly support Everglades restoration projects, especially those within the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP). Both the Corps and the Department of Interior (DOI) are charged with the critical task of restoring the Everglades and reinvigorating its ecosystems. Your attention to these issues is appreciated and we look forward to working with your Administration on them.

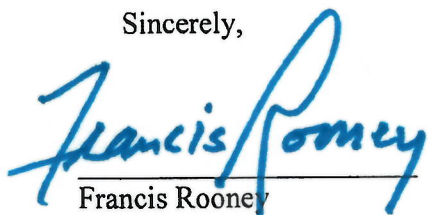
The Everglades ecosystem spans across 16 counties and 164 cities in Florida. It has a \$2 trillion economic impact and 55% of the real estate value in the state of Florida is tied to it. During South Florida's annual wet season, roughly 60 inches of rainfall provides for ample water that replenishes the aquifers which provide drinking water to 8.1 million people in South Florida. This unique ecosystem exerts a dominant influence over Florida's hydrologic cycle and seasonal weather patterns.

However, the system is now less than half of its original size and human impacts have degraded the quality of the water. More than that, Lake Okeechobee now fills up six times faster than it can be drained resulting in massive discharges into the surrounding watershed. Extremes in water levels being too high or too low in the Lake produce very different consequences. Too high and untreated discharges escape to the coasts and wreak havoc on saline environments; too low and salt water encroaches on brackish ecosystems, killing flora and fauna. Balance must be restored to this complex and delicate region.

Most recently, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016 authorized two CERP projects that now await further action by the Corps and DOI. These include the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) as well as additional authorizations to complete the Picayune Strand project. These projects are an important step in achieving more optimal water flow and we encourage immediate funding for these projects. The CERP is a multi-year and multi-phase project that competes for funding from Corps projects across the country. The Everglades deserve your attention and support and we ask that you provide the necessary resources to restore the region.

The restoration of the Everglades has far ranging impacts to the entire State of Florida and the rest of the country. We look forward to working with you on these important infrastructure projects.

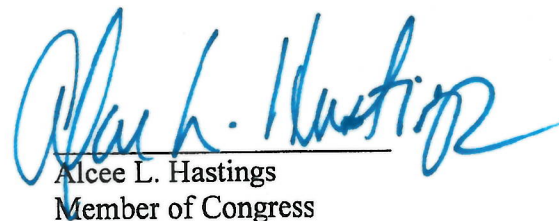
Sincerely,



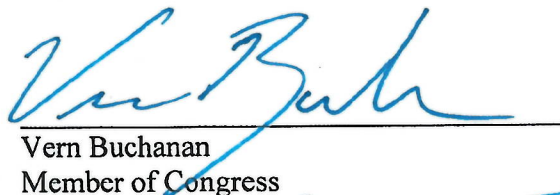
Francis Rooney
Member of Congress



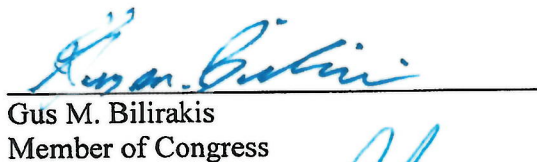
Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



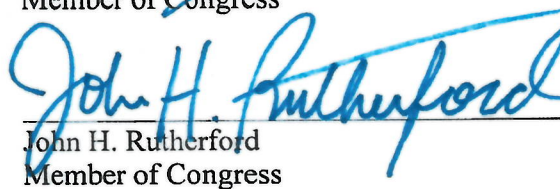
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



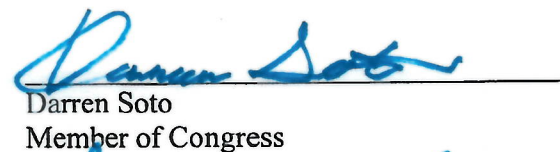
Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



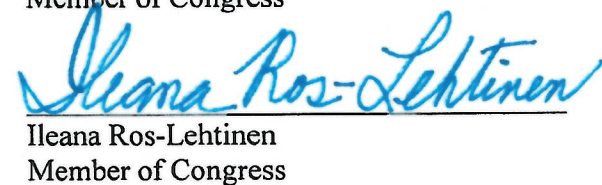
Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



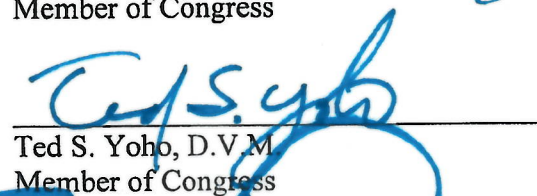
Darren Soto
Member of Congress




Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



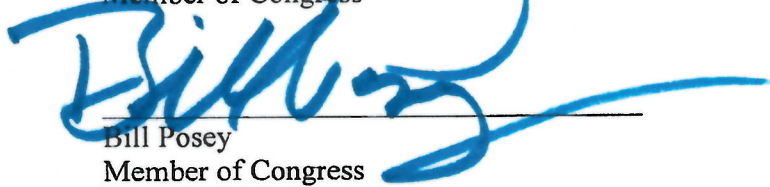
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



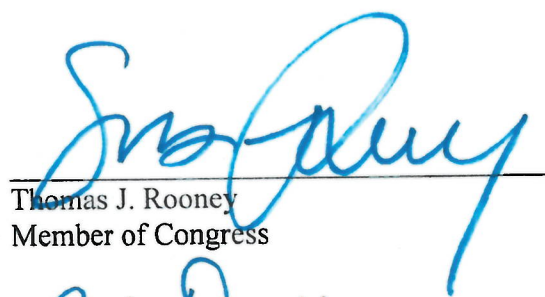
Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress




Lois Frankel
Member of Congress




Bill Posey
Member of Congress



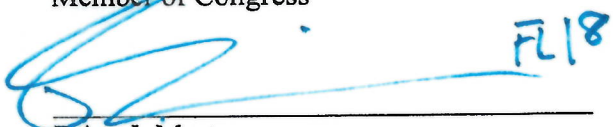
Thomas J. Rooney
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Theodore E. Deutch
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Charlie Crist
Member of Congress




Brian J. Mast
Member of Congress



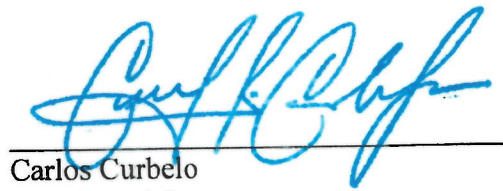
Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



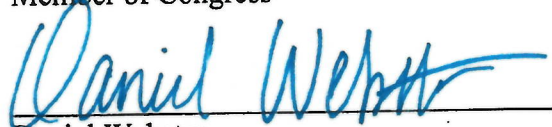
Val Demings
Member of Congress




Dr. Neal Dunn
Member of Congress



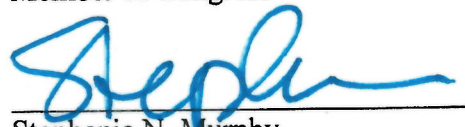
Carlos Curbelo
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Daniel Webster
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Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress



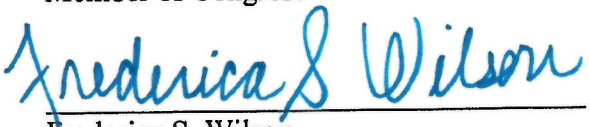
Stephanie N. Murphy
Member of Congress



Al Lawson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress